

Land Use Plan

Description

Land use planning focuses on making good choices about how growth occurs in the community over a period of time. Land use generally refers to the manner in which parcels of land, or the structures on them, are used. The process begins, as with all plans, with the community visioning and strategic planning process. Controlling land use is a means to achieve the visions and goals from these activities. Comprehensive plans often have an important land use element, but an individual land use plan is typically a more extensive document compiled by a local or regional government entity that includes goals, objectives, and strategies for future development or preservation of land. In its projections, the plan specifies certain areas for specific land uses.

The land use planning process begins with an analysis of the existing land use characteristics. From these existing conditions, future land uses can be identified to compliment the present situation as well as to make improvements that will enable the achievement of community goals.

The future land use map is not the same as zoning. It is a decision-making tool to help guide the Plan Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, and the City/Town Council of County Commissioners as they make decisions about implementing or amending land development regulations.

Land use planning is essential to the smart growth and sustainability of a community. Over the years, it has become commonplace to isolate land uses from each other, separating residential from other different types of land uses. It has also become common to plan for the automobile by separating land uses with connections only available by car. These types of land use practices, over the years, have lead to unsustainable sprawl. While sprawl is felt immediately in traffic congestion and commuting times, sprawl can also cause larger and more unseen issues with air pollution, energy consumption, reliance on foreign oil, loss of habitat, social inequality, and the loss of sense of place and community.

Today, land use planning attempts to address the negative development patterns that have arisen over the past 50 years by resorting to previous, more compact land use characteristics from the early 20th century or by creating new innovative approaches. Present land use planning philosophy involves a mixed use approach where different development types are integrated within the same buildings and land areas. This helps to curb or limit the negative development patterns listed above as well as create a more exciting and interesting built environment.

Managing land use in the community includes managing the type, quantity, and quality of development that occurs. The type is generally expressed in broad land use categories like residential or commercial. The quantity of development considers how much development is appropriate for the community. This is primarily expressed in the future land use map along with the location of development. Quality seeks to make a public statement of the standard of development that is expected in the community including open space, landscaping, and building requirements.

Land use planning does not have to be limited to the designation of uses for individual parcels. It can also incorporate other important development guidelines that have major ties to land use. Topics such as housing choices, walkability, historic preservation, utilities, and transportation can be included as integral elements of a land use plan. These common growth management topics in combination with a future land use map create a very effective land use plan that a community can use as a guide for the future development of zoning, subdivision control, and other land development regulations.

Relevant Statutes

There are no specific statutory requirements for the use of the tool.

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Capacity Recommendations

- A comprehensive plan should be adopted.

Guidelines / Considerations for Implementation

- Implementation tools used throughout the United States include:
 - o Urban growth boundaries
 - o Public participation requirements
 - o Impact fees
 - o Regional coordination requirements
 - o Mandatory implementation
 - o Zoning

Example Ordinances

No example studies are available for this tool.

Example Studies

- **Columbus, IN – Land Use Plan Element:** Columbus, IN's Land Use Plan is an element of their overall Comprehensive Plan. The plan includes land use principles of the future development of Columbus and its surrounding areas that are shown through land use maps and land use category descriptions. It defines the neighborhood and district boundaries and identifies the character, both existing and suggested, of the areas. Each character area is summarized by the land use principles that should guide the future development of that area. [\[http://www.columbus.in.gov/pdf/planning/adoptedcbuslup.pdf\]](http://www.columbus.in.gov/pdf/planning/adoptedcbuslup.pdf)
- **“Blueprint for Liberty: Future Land Use Plan,”** was singled out, by the American Planning Association in 2000 with a planning award, as an exemplary way to engage citizen support and build consensus. Through a variety of forums, workshops, meetings, and other activities, planners in the community near Kansas City, Missouri, increased public participation at the same time they addressed, through the 10-year comprehensive plan, sustainable development, transportation, housing, open space, historic preservation, and related land-use issues. [\[http://www.planning.org/growing smart/States/Missouri.htm\]](http://www.planning.org/growing smart/States/Missouri.htm)

Helpful References and Links

- **The Indiana Planning Association (IPA)** refers citizen planners to the plannersweb.com site, posted by the Planning Commissioners Journal for a fairly comprehensive list of helpful links. Topics include: smart growth, environmental and natural resource planning/farmland protection, American planning history, and research on land use policy, as well as many others. This resource is not actually part of the IPA. [\[http://www.indianaplanning.com/\]](http://www.indianaplanning.com/)
- **Citizen Participation in Land Use Planning – Purdue CES:** This is a short reference discussing how to create more public involvement in the land use planning process. The guide is focused on offering suggestions for citizens about different ways to participate and why it is important. [\[http://www.ces.purdue.edu/extmedia/ID/ID-226.pdf\]](http://www.ces.purdue.edu/extmedia/ID/ID-226.pdf)

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- **Dane County, Wisconsin Land Use Planning Toolkit:** This tool kit is meant to inform the citizen of Dane County on land use planning and the use of spatial information technology (geographic information systems, GIS). It depicts that GIS as a key technology for mapping and addressing land use issues. [\[http://www.ruralgis.org/publications/documents/Toolkit.pdf\]](http://www.ruralgis.org/publications/documents/Toolkit.pdf)
- **The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)** provides a planning toolkit which includes successful examples for planning processes. One of these processes is public participation, which is vital to land use planning, and more specifically “land use scenario development”. [\[http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/landuse/tools.cfm#invol3\]](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/landuse/tools.cfm#invol3)

Helpful Contacts

- **Indiana Land Use Consortium** is made up of different business, development, government, and education representatives from throughout Indiana. Its purpose is to offer educational information and discussion for land use policy in the state that are guided by a list of principles on their website. [\[http://www.indianalanduse.org/index.html\]](http://www.indianalanduse.org/index.html)

Jamie Palmer, Chair
(317) 261-3046
jlpalmer@iupui.edu

- **Purdue University Community Extension Services – Land Use Team:** The Purdue Land Use team offers resources to help communities address land use issues. The team provides educational resources and a variety of programs for citizens, local officials, and other development groups. [\[http://www.ces.purdue.edu/landuse/index.html\]](http://www.ces.purdue.edu/landuse/index.html)

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Leadership and Community
Development
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- **Indiana Planning Association List of Consultants** – This resource lists numerous private consulting firms that offer planning services. Some of the most common tasks performed by consultants are the formation of comprehensive plans, corridor studies, zoning ordinances, and other development plans and regulations. However, the resource is only available to Indiana Planning Association members.

Indiana Planning Association
PO Box 44804
Indianapolis, IN 46244
(317) 767-7780
<http://www.indianaplanning.com>

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Other Possible Funding Sources

- **Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs – Planning Grant Program:** Planning grants funded with Federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) dollars from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) are administered by the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA). The goal of the program is to encourage communities to plan for long-term community development. Community Leaders can apply for projects relating to such issues as infrastructure, downtown revitalization, and community facilities. To be competitive, projects must demonstrate:
 - The area to be served has a substantial low- and moderate-income population (51% or greater) or is designated a slum or blighted area by local resolution.
 - They meet a goal of the Federal Act
 - The particular planning initiative addresses established long-term community priorities
 - The funds granted with have a significant impact on the overall project
 - The community has a strong commitment to the project; and
 - The project is ready to proceed upon the grant being awarded and will be completed within 12 months (source: Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs <http://www.in.gov/ocra/index.html>)

Planning Grant Application:

http://www.in.gov/ocra/forms/CFFPG_10.01.06.doc

Contact:

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Community Affairs Director

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kweissenberger@ocra.in.gov

Program Objectives and Issues Addressed

- Growth management
- Zoning ordinance
- Sustainability
- Growth
- Urban Sprawl
- Green space
- Land preservation
- Socio-economic issues
- Physical features

See Also

- Comprehensive Plan
- Downtown/ Main Street Plan
- Neighborhood and Sub Area Plan
- Regional/ Intergovernmental Planning
- Zoning Ordinance
- Overlay Zones